

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated, August 18, 2003, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on November 18, 2003. Claims 1-2, 4, 7 and 13-14 have been amended to more clearly recite aspects of the invention. Claims 6 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and all intervening claims. Applicant believes no new matter has been introduced by the amendments presented herein. The amendments have been made in a good faith effort to advance prosecution on the merits. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-14, 16, and 18-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,320,402 (*Phan*). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. *Phan* is not a proper reference to the claimed invention because the parent application (U.S. Serial No. 09/391,341) of the present application provides support for the claimed invention and has an earlier filing date (September 7, 1999) than *Phan*'s filing date of February 3, 2000. Support for the claimed invention may be found in the entire specification of the parent application, including page 11, line 28 - page 12, line 2; page 14, line 18 – page 20, line 22; page 22, lines 15-19; and page 23, lines 11-23. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1-5, 7-8, 10-14, 16, and 18-21.

Claims 9 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,320,402 (*Phan*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,274,434 (*Morioka*). Since *Phan* is an improper reference, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is also improper. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 9 and 17.

Claims 6 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 6 and 15 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and all intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 6 and 15 are in condition for allowance.

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest the claimed method or apparatus. Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

The prior art made of record is noted. However, it is believed that the secondary references are no more pertinent to the Applicant's disclosure than the primary references cited in the office action. Therefore, it is believed that a detailed discussion of the secondary references is not deemed necessary for a full and complete response to this office action. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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